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WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 6823 of September 14, 1995

National Hispanic Heritage Month, 1995

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

America has always drawn strength from the extraordinary diversity of its people. The earliest settlers came to this great land seeking opportunity, bringing with them an abundant wealth of traditions from countries the world over. Thus the vibrant Hispanic culture has long been entwined with our Nation's heritage, and people of Latin American and Spanish ancestry have infused our national life with energy and vision. In the arts, the sciences, the business world, academia, and government, Hispanic Americans have added immeasurably to our progress.

Later this month, I will proudly bestow on the late Willie Velasquez our Nation's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom. His landmark work to register Hispanic voters helped to bring these Americans into the mainstream of American public life, and the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project that he founded continues to thrive today.

Last year, I was pleased to sign an Executive order creating the President's Advisory Commission and White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans. Recognizing the vital importance of providing every one of our children with fundamental knowledge and skills, the Commission was charged with creating an agenda to increase educational opportunities for Hispanic Americans.

Today, as we stand on the threshold of a new century, we look to the outstanding contributions of Hispanic Americans for inspiration and leadership. Let us join in support of Hispanic children and families as they strive to fulfill the American Dream.

To pay tribute to the achievements of Hispanic citizens and to honor the importance of Latin American and Spanish traditions in our national culture, the Congress, by Public Law 100-402, has authorized and requested the President to issue annually a proclamation designating September 15 through October 15 as "National Hispanic Heritage Month."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim September 15 through October 15, 1995, as National Hispanic Heritage Month. I call upon government officials, educators, and all the people of the United States to honor this observance with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities, and encourage all Americans to rededicate themselves to the pursuit of equality.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fourteenth day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and nine-

ty-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twentieth.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 6824 of September 15, 1995

National Rehabilitation Week, 1995

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

National Rehabilitation Week offers us a unique opportunity each year to measure our progress on the long road to creating a totally accessible society in America. This year, as we also mark the 5th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the 75th anniversary of the Rehabilitation Act of 1920, we can look back with satisfaction on the tremendous advances we have made on our journey.

Because of the passage and implementation of these landmark pieces of legislation, millions of Americans with disabilities have received the training and skills to become competitive and productive employees. Working Americans who became disabled in mid-life have received the help they need to adapt to their changed circumstances and to resume their contributions to our society. Today, employers across the Nation are working closely with State rehabilitation agencies to ensure that men and women with disabilities are trained to succeed at the jobs of tomorrow.

Thanks largely to the efforts of people with disabilities, America has come a long way from the time when these citizens were kept out of sight and out of mind. Today, our Nation's disability policies emphasize inclusion, independence, and empowerment. Our laws declare that Americans with disabilities have a fundamental right to full equality—and are entitled to the same choices and opportunities as their fellow citizens who are not disabled.

But we still have a long way to travel before we reach our goal of full equality in fact as well as in law. Today, two-thirds of all persons with disabilities remain unemployed, although many of them already have received appropriate training and rehabilitative services. And even more distressing, millions of these individuals would find it difficult to work if a job were offered to them simply because our society has not instituted the changes needed to help them perform their work responsibilities.

People with disabilities want to work, and it is vital that we offer them the means to gain full employment. Not only is this the right thing to do, it is the prudent thing as well. If America is to continue to succeed in our rapidly changing global economy, we cannot afford to waste the talents, knowledge, vision, or abilities of a single individual.

Let us celebrate National Rehabilitation Week by rededicating ourselves to the spirit of equality. As we move toward the era of hope and opportunity promised by the 21st century, we must guarantee that every American has a share in that hope and ensure that the doors of opportunity are open to all. By empowering each person, including